



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO • DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND LAND USE

DATE: June 8, 2012

TO: Planning Commission

SUBJECT: ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT TO STREAMLINE THE COMMUNITY DESIGN REVIEW PROCEDURE AND TO UPDATE THE PARKING REGULATIONS; POD 11-005 (District: All)

SUMMARY:

Overview

This Zoning Ordinance Amendment consists of two components: the creation of a community design review checklist procedure and amendments to the County parking regulations and Parking Design Manual. The community design review checklist procedure component is intended to simplify and streamline the "B" Designator community design review process by reducing processing times and costs. This new option provides an exemption to the existing "B" Designator Site Plan Permit for applicants of commercial, industrial, and multifamily residential projects that meet specific qualifying design standards and criteria. This component would require amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to implement the new community design review checklist procedure, the creation of design review compliance checklist for the nine existing Community Design Review Guidelines, and the development of associated application forms and fees. At this time, staff is bringing forward the Fallbrook Design Review Checklist only. The Design Review Checklists for the remaining communities will be presented to the Board of Supervisors by the end of this year.

The second component of the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment involves amending the parking regulations and updating the Parking Design Manual to reflect current and reasonable parking requirements and to ensure consistency with the new community design review checklist procedure and other development regulations, such as California stormwater and water quality laws, the County Fire Code, and the County Water Conservation in Landscaping Ordinance.

Recommendation(s)

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND LAND USE

That the Planning Commission make the following recommendations to the Board of Supervisors:

1. Find that the proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental

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Quality Act (CEQA) as specified under Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment for the reasons stated in the Notice of Exemption.

2. Adopt the attached Form of Ordinance (Attachment B), titled:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE TO STREAMLINE THE COMMUNITY DESIGN REVIEW PROCEDURE AND TO UPDATE THE PARKING REGULATIONS.

3. Adopt the Fallbrook Design Review Checklist (Attachment D)

Fiscal Impact

N/A

Business Impact Statement

The adoption of the proposed ordinance amendments will benefit San Diego County by promoting more cost-effective and well-designed commercial, industrial, and multifamily residential development in areas with a Special Area "B" Designator by streamlining the design review process, thereby reducing Site Plan Permit processing times and costs. A Site Plan of average complexity is estimated to cost \$10,000 to \$15,000 and take 1-2 years to process. The proposed community design review procedure would cost applicants approximately \$1,000 and is estimated to take 1 to 3 months to process. Therefore, by reducing project processing times and costs, the proposed project will benefit the County by encouraging commercial, industrial, and multifamily residential development in areas zoned with a Special Area "B" Designator creating increased local employment opportunities.

Advisory Board Statement

N/A

Involved Parties

County of San Diego

BACKGROUND:

The proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment consists of two components. The first component introduces a new community design review checklist procedure as an alternative to the "B" Designator Site Plan Permit process. This option is available to applicants of commercial, industrial, and multifamily residential projects that meet specific qualifying design standards and criteria. The new procedure is intended to streamline the community design review process and reduce processing time and costs. The second component involves amending the parking regulations and updating the Parking Design Manual to reflect current needs and trends and to ensure consistency with the new community design review checklist procedure and other development regulations.

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Community Design Review Checklist

Within the County of San Diego, there are currently nine unincorporated communities (Alpine, Bonsall, Fallbrook, Lakeside, Ramona, Spring Valley, Sweetwater, Valley Center, and the 1-15 Design Corridor) with adopted Community Design Guidelines. These guidelines apply to commercial, industrial, and multifamily residential development on properties zoned with a "B" Designator which indicates the property is subject to Community Design Review Special Area Regulations. The Community Design Guidelines ensure that commercial, industrial, and multifamily residential development projects are carefully reviewed against adopted design standards to ensure that high quality site planning, architecture, landscape design and other features, such as signage and lighting, are considered within the context of the surrounding community. Pursuant to Zoning Ordinance Sections 5750 and 7150, properties zoned with a "B" Community Design Review Area Designator currently require the Director of Planning and Land Use to approve a Site Plan Permit prior to issuance of a building permit and use of the property.

Under the current Site Plan Permit review process, architectural features of proposed building and structures undergo design review for consistency with approved Community Design Guidelines and undergo environmental review to ensure compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The current Site Plan Permit process also includes a recommendation from the applicable community design review board or community planning/sponsor group to the Director of Planning and Land Use as to whether the proposed development meets community design guidelines.

This Zoning Ordinance Amendment proposes an alternative procedure that allows design approval through an applicant's compliance with a community design review checklist. The proposed Ordinance Amendment authorizes the Board of Supervisors to establish a community design review checklist with clear, objective design standards for each community based on currently adopted community design guidelines. To develop the design review checklist standards, each guideline within the community's design guidelines was reviewed to determine if it could be incorporated into the compliance checklist as an objective standard. Where necessary, the community group responsible for design review provided guidance. Then the design checklist standard was written using clear, objective language to convey the requirement.

Under the proposed design review checklist process, proposed development must be an allowed use that would require only a building permit except for the "B" Community Design Review Area zoning designation. If a proposed commercial, industrial, and multifamily residential development meets all applicable objective checklist standards, the Director of Planning and Land Use will grant an exemption to the Site Plan Permit requirement pursuant to Zoning Ordinance Section 5757, as proposed in this Zoning Ordinance Amendment. As with the current Site Plan Permit process for Community Design Review, the local community design review board or planning/sponsor group continues to make a recommendation to the Director of Planning and Land Use regarding whether the development meets all applicable objective standards in the design review checklist.

The checklist process may not be applicable to all projects. Projects that have biological constraints, code enforcement issues, a "D" Design Review Area designation, a historical

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designation, or require concurrent discretionary permits, such a Major Use Permit or Tentative Map, will not be eligible to receive community design approval through the community design review checklist process and will need to process a standard Site Plan Permit. Review for on-site constraints limiting the ability to utilize the checklist process will be reviewed at project intake.

The proposed Design Review Checklist would benefit both applicants and unincorporated communities. The proposed Ordinance Amendments would provide a simpler and quicker process for applicants resulting in reduced processing times and costs. The proposed Design Review Checklist process would provide certainty to unincorporated communities that future development will be consistent with Community Design Guidelines and the Community Plan. The proposed process would also provide certainty to applicants by assuring approval of projects that comply with the Design Review Checklist

At this time, staff is bringing forward the Fallbrook Design Review Checklist only. The Design Review Checklists for the remaining communities will be presented to the Board of Supervisors by the end of this year.

Parking Regulations

The second component of the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment involves amending the parking regulations and updating the Parking Design Manual, which currently serves as an appendix to the parking regulations and provides parking lot design standards, such as parking stall and aisle width, road surfacing and landscaping. Parking and parking lot design are critical components of a project's overall layout and design. This project proposes a comprehensive update to the County of San Diego's existing parking regulations as prescribed in the Zoning Ordinance and to the Parking Design Manual. This project proposes:

- Amendments to the parking regulations in the Zoning Ordinance;
- Updates to the Parking Design Manual to reflect current and reasonable parking requirements for the various use types that exist throughout the County;
- Improvements to the organization of the regulations and standards to make them easier to read, understand, and enforce; and
- Adding new parking design standards that incorporate the County's requirements for surface water quality, fire regulations, landscaping and water conservation, and other low impact development (LID) and sustainable principles.

The new parking design standards would ensure consistency between parking regulations and standards and other related development regulations and standards, such as the Community Design Guidelines.

PROJECT ISSUES:

No objections have been received on the proposed Fallbrook Design Review Checklist and only minor comments have been received regarding the proposed changes to the parking regulations.

WAIVERS AND EXCEPTIONS:

N/A

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ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS:

The proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as specified under Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment. See Attachment A for the environmental documentation.

PREVIOUS ACTIONS:

N/A

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN WITHOUT APPROPRIATE PERMITS:

N/A

PUBLIC INPUT:

Department of Planning and Land Use staff conducted external stakeholder meetings on September 15, 2011 and October 13, 2011 to present and obtain feedback on the proposed changes to the Parking Regulations and Manual and to the Community Design Review procedure, respectively. County staff also presented the design review compliance checklists to each of the nine design review boards and community planning/sponsor group and made revisions to the design review checklist based on comments received.

On March 23, 2012, drafts of the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendments, revised Parking Design Manual, and the Fallbrook Design Review Checklist were distributed for public review to Community Planning and Sponsor Groups and other external stakeholders. The Community Groups and stakeholders then submitted comments and suggestions, and staff revised the draft documents accordingly. There were no major comments received or issues raised during the public review period. To review the public comments in their entirety please see Attachment F for Public Correspondance.

DEPARTMENT REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

1. Commercial, industrial, and multi-family projects in the more urbanized and developed locations are typically infill development or renovations of existing structures. Implementation of the proposed design review checklist process will not increase or otherwise affect the density or intensity of development beyond that which is already allowed under the General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.
2. The proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance are consistent with the General Plan because the project changes only the regulations which implement the goals and policies of the General Plan. No changes in actual goals, policies, or allowed densities of the General Plan would be affected by the proposed amendments.
3. Pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State of California CEQA Guidelines, the proposed action is exempt CEQA, because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment.
4. By updating the design review standards and parking regulations in Zoning Ordinance, the proposed project will ensure consistency with California stormwater and water

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quality laws, the County Consolidated Fire Code, and the County Water Conservation in Landscaping Ordinance.

5. The proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance are consistent with the Board of Supervisors' direction to convert discretionary processes to ministerial processes in order to streamline and simplify the land development process within unincorporated communities of San Diego County.

cc: All Community Planning/Sponsor Groups
Joseph Farace, Planning Manager, Department of Planning and Land Use, M.S. O650
Devon Muto, Chief, Department of Planning and Land Use, M.S. O650

email cc:

Ed Sinsay, DPW Team Leader, Department of Public Works, M.S. O336
Bill Witt, Senior Deputy County Counsel, M.S. A12
Pam Elias, Chief, Codes Division, Department of Planning & Land Use, M.S. O650
Darren Gretler, Chief, Building, Department of Planning & Land Use, M.S. O650
Dag Bunnemeyer, Planning Manager, Department of Planning & Land Use, M.S. O336

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Environmental Documentation
Attachment B – Draft Form of Ordinance – Clean Copy
Attachment C – Draft Form of Ordinance – Informational Copy
Attachment D – Draft Fallbrook Design Review Checklist
Attachment E – Draft Design Review Checklist Instructions
Attachment F – Draft Parking Design Manual
Attachment G – Public Correspondance

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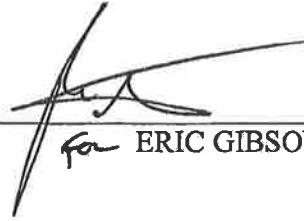
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AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Eric Gibson', written over a horizontal line.

for ERIC GIBSON, DIRECTOR